

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-25 were pending, and claims 1, 5, 19 and 25 were amended, claims 6-9, 13-15 and 24 were canceled and new claims 26-34 were added in a preliminary amendment filed April 20, 2004. The present Office Action mailed January 30, 2007 did not address the claim amendments, or the remarks presented in the preliminary amendment, or the new claims that were presented in the preliminary amendment and which were charged for by the USPTO. Thus, solely for the purpose of expediting examination, Applicants are again presenting herein amendments to the claims as originally filed and new claims similar to those presented in the unentered, or at least unexamined, preliminary amendment. Therefore, upon entry of this amendment, which is respectfully requested, claims 1-5, 10-12, 16-23 and 25-34 will be pending.

Claims 1-25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Serizawa et al., U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0169013 (hereinafter "Serizawa"). Applicants respectfully assert that Serizawa fails to teach or suggest various limitations in the pending claims for at least the foregoing reasons.

Serizawa discloses a race game system wherein a player can join in a race in progress at any time. In Serizawa, the race game may be continually advancing, irrespective of the presence or absence of players to control the objects representing vehicles. In this manner, a player may join in an ongoing race wherein, upon joining, control of a selected racing vehicle is transferred to the user.

Applicants respectfully assert that Serizawa fails to teach or suggest the limitations of claim 1. For example, Serizawa fails to teach or suggest the limitation of "automatically generating an interrupt condition during game play of the racing game at a first game state, said first game state having a first set of statistics for a plurality of race participants" and the limitation of "responsive to said interrupt condition, interrupting game play and calculating a second set of statistics for an interrupt interval, wherein the second set of statistics are associated with a second game state representing the end of the interrupt interval for said plurality of race participants, and wherein the second set of statistics are calculated by simulating

events that occur during the interrupt interval based on the first set of statistics " as recited in amended claim 1.

For example, Serizawa teaches that users may join in an ongoing race at any time, and that the race continually progresses irrespective of whether the player is participating or not; that is, game play continues to progress as players enter or leave a game. See, e.g., Serizawa Abstract, and paragraphs [0039] and [0333]. In Serizawa, a mishap or other trouble may be generated to stop the race, and then the vehicles may be pulled to the start position (Serizawa paragraph [0043]). However, game play is continually advancing in this case; it is just that visually, the player(s) see the cars being towed or otherwise moved to the new position. Thus, Serizawa fails to teach or suggest interrupting game play responsive to an automatically generated interrupt condition.

Also, Serizawa does not teach calculating a second set of game statistics by simulating events that occur during an interrupt interval; again, in Serizawa, game play continually progresses regardless of participation by a player. It may be in Serizawa that a mishap or other trouble may be generated to stop the race, and then the vehicles may be pulled to the start position, however, there is no teaching in Serizawa that statistics are calculated by simulating events that occur during the interrupt interval. Aspects of the present invention advantageously allow a player to "skip ahead" in time, and thus avoid time consuming race events such as Yellow Flag cautions, yet simulate the race that occurs during that cautionary period or other interrupt interval (see, e.g., paragraph [05]). Simulating events that occur during an interrupt interval is not contemplated by the teachings Serizawa.

Further, Serizawa fails to teach or suggest "resuming game play of the racing game in the second game state" as recited in claim 1. Serizawa may teach resuming control by players, but game play does not cease in Serizawa until the race terminates.

For similar reasoning as above, Applicants respectfully assert that Serizawa fails to teach or suggest the limitations of claim 19. In addition to the reasoning above, Serizawa also fails to teach or suggest code including instructions to retrieve statistics from and store statistics to a database as recited therein.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that independent claims 1 and 19 are novel and non-obvious in view of Serizawa for at least the above reasons. Applicants also respectfully assert that all claims depending from claim 1 and 19 are also novel and non-obvious in view of Serizawa based at least on their dependency from claims 1 or 19.

New claim 29 is similar to claim 32 from the parent case, and is directed to simulating a complete race. Applicants respectfully assert that Serizawa fails to teach or suggest simulating a complete race.

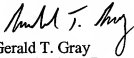
Applicants respectfully assert that no new matter is hereby added. Support for the various amendments to the claims as well as the new claims can be found throughout the specification, however, please see page 2, lines 3 to 7, and paragraphs [07], [18], [20] [53], [54] [56] and [57] for examples of where such support can be found.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 925-472-5000.

Respectfully submitted,


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